



Iowa Youth Ballet presents:

Sugarplum Celebration

**December 13th, 2020
1pm and 6pm**

Stephens Auditorium

Sugarplum Celebration Order of Program

The Skaters

staged by Lisa Luiken-Woxell

Candy Cane Cuties

choreographed by Teagan Roberts

Auld Lang Syne

choreographed by Maureen McGrath

Celtic Visions

choreographed by Serica Maiers

Spanish Variation

choreographed by Wendy Leopold

Sugarplum Variations

choreographed by Wendy Leopold after Helgi Thomasson

Skating Dreams

choreographed by Ellen Mullen

Happy Holidays

choreographed by Maureen McGrath

New Fallen Snow

choreographed by Wendy Leopold

Holiday Memories

choreographed by Ellen Mullen

~~~~ INTERMISSION ~~~~

*Silent Night*

choreographed by Maureen McGrath

*Wizards in Winter*

choreographed by Teagan Roberts

*Reindeer Round-Up*

choreographed by Teagan Roberts

*March of the Wooden Soldiers*

choreographed by Maureen McGrath

*Waltz of the Flowers*

choreographed by Lisa Luiken-Woxell

*Nutcracker Grand Pas*

after original Petipa/Ivanov staged by Robert Thomas

*Sleigh Ride*

choreographed by Gil McNaughton

*We Three Kings*

choreographed by Madaline Patton

*Carol of the Bells*

choreographed by Maureen McGrath

*It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year (Bows)*

## *Meet our Artistic Directors*



*Miyoko Kato Thomas* received her extensive ballet training at the Tachibana Ballet School of Tokyo in her native Japan, subsequently joining the Asami Maki Ballet Company. In 1964, she moved to New York City, and signed with the Harkness Ballet Company. She was promoted to the rank of Soloist in 1969. With the Harkness Ballet, Ms. Kato performed at the White House and toured Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and throughout the United States.

Ms. Kato joined the Joffrey Ballet in 1974. She has performed leading roles in works ranging from classical ballets such as “Swan Lake”, “Coppélia”, “Giselle” (Queen of the Willies), “The Nutcracker”, “Don Quixote”, “Les Sylphides”, “Raymonda”, “Pas des Quatre”, and “The Firebird”, to modern ballets and jazz. She has worked with numerous choreographers including Antony Tudor, Jerome Robbins, Agnes DeMille, Alvin Ailey, Twyla Tharp, Robert Joffrey, Gerald Arpino, and Jack Cole. Among the highlights of her career was a performance for President Johnson at the White House in 1965. In 1966, Kato toured Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East under the sponsorship of the State Department



*Robert Thomas* studied dance in Ames, Iowa, as a child with Ann Dirksen. In 1964, with the help of Ms. Dirksen, Thomas received a dance scholarship to Ted Shawn’s Jacob’s Pillow in Lee, MA. From the summer of 1964 -1967, Thomas retained the position of trainee in the highly competitive Harkness Ballet in New York City. In 1967, at age 19, Robert joined the Harkness Ballet Dance Company. When the first Harkness Company disbanded in 1969, Robert was offered positions with The Stuttgart Ballet, The National Ballet Contemporair, The Joffrey Ballet, The Geneva Ballet, and the second Harkness Company. He accepted a position with the Joffrey Ballet, where he danced for eight years. Robert additionally served as Assistant Ballet Master in the Joffrey Ballet for two years (1984-1986).

*Robert and Miyoko* were married in 1971. In 1978, they retired from the professional dance world and moved to Ames. Since that time, over 10,000 young dancers have been trained and guided in their pursuit of dance by the Robert Thomas Dancer. Today, Robert and Miyoko own and operate two studios located in Ames. In 1981, they collaborated with the Iowa State Center to create what has become a favorite holiday rendition of “The Nutcracker Ballet”. Robert and Miyoko have served as Artistic Directors for the production, performed each December at Stephens Auditorium since its inception. In 1991, they introduced the Dancer Dancers as a competition team for the studios. With Maureen McGrath as Artistic Director, the team has reached national recognition, won hundreds of awards, and has been invited to Nationals each of the last 17 years. In 2001, Robert and Miyoko created the Iowa Youth Ballet (IYB). They are currently the Executive Director and Artistic Director Emeritus of this non-profit dance company based in Ames. IYB provides opportunities for aspiring young dancers to further their studies and work in a professional-like environment. They introduced the Irish Performance Team in 2009, to promote Irish dance in Ames and the surrounding area. Robert and Miyoko enjoy working and providing art in Ames and Central Iowa, finding this community to be responsive, supportive, and rich with talent to be developed.

*IYB thanks, and asks you to please support our donors*

Allen L. Kockler Company  
Arends Sanitation  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Bernhard  
Dana & Donna Doran  
Leisa Doran  
Rachel Haynes  
Diane McCarthy  
Pete Tekippe Photography  
Quality Cuts Salon/Coiffure  
Dr. Thomas & Cindy Stark  
Olena Watababe  
Wilson Toyota of Ames  
Anonymous

## Performers

### *The Skaters Soloists*

Elizabeth Hinman  
Riley Nelson  
Haileigh Patton  
Grace Schmitt

### *The Skaters Pas*

Ellie Barry  
Daniel Kellen

### *Candy Cane Cuties*

Ruby Barron  
Violet Gould  
Vivian Gould  
Blythe Hansen  
Hadley Hansen  
Quinn Hibbing  
Cole Kepley  
Miso Kim  
Audree Pantenburg  
Cecelia Pistorius  
Hannagan Rooney  
Hattie Rooney  
Zoey Ross  
Nora Van Gorp  
Isabel Wadsley  
Kai Watanabe  
Harper Watson

### *Huld Lang Syne*

Ellie Barry  
Hallie Johnson  
Riley Nelson  
Michelle Osanya  
Ava Reason  
Clara Serao  
Adam Wolf  
Isabel Wolf

### *Celtic Visions*

Evan Bay Brakke  
Morgan Dange  
Addy Danielson  
Lillian Hovar  
Serica Maiers  
Grace Markley  
Ashlea McConville  
Erin Murphy  
Haileigh Patton  
Madaline Patton  
Quinn Thompson

### *Spanish Variation Soloists*

Grace Nelson  
Kate Nelson

### *Sugarplum Variations Soloists*

Eden Bruner  
Elizabeth Hinman  
Eva Kumsher  
Piper Schrank

### *Sugarplum Variations Principal*

Michelle Osanya

### *Skating Dreams*

Noelle Kibbe  
Hope Rooney  
Makayla Schuler  
Sophia Watanabe  
Harmony Wong

### *Happy Holidays*

Ellie Barry  
Leah Biensen  
Blair Hibbing  
Hallie Johnson  
Eva Kellen  
Riley Nelson  
Michelle Osanya  
Ella Overman  
Catherine Pollard  
Autumn Rettig  
Lily Rettig  
Grace Schmitt  
Clara Serao  
Adam Wolf  
Isabel Wolf

### *New Fallen Snow*

Andrew Frandson  
Grace Ann Frandson  
Allison Tjaden  
Will Williams

### *Holiday Memories\**

Eden Bruner  
Erin Murphy  
Grace Nelson  
Kate Nelson  
Catherine Pollard  
Lily Rettig  
Adam Wolf

### *Silent Night*

Ellie Barry  
Hallie Johnson  
Grace Nelson  
Kate Nelson  
Riley Nelson  
Michelle Osanya  
Ava Reason  
Autumn Rettig  
Lily Rettig  
Clara Serao  
Will Williams  
Adam Wolf  
Isabel Wolf

### *Wizards in Winter*

Kelsey Allman  
Louisa Ludes-Bedell  
Teagan Roberts  
Makayla Schuler  
Allison Tjaden  
Brianna Tjaden

### *Reindeer Round-Up*

Janelle Allman  
Libby Carl  
Sophija Elsberry  
Yasha Mendelev  
Lindsey Robinson  
Bianca Serao

### *March of the Wooden Soldiers*

Mary Bresnahan  
Liza Mendelev  
Everlie Mitchell  
Brianna Tjaden  
Josie Van Gorp  
Raquel Wolf  
Harmony Wong

### *Waltz of the Flowers*

Grace Ann Frandson  
Blair Hibbing  
Autumn Rettig  
Clara Serao  
Alexandra Severe  
Maia Westort

### *\*Accompanists*

Mrs. Peggy Dieter, pianist  
Nick Grandgenett, percussionist

*Performers, continued*

*Flower Soloists*

Erin Murphy  
Riley Nelson  
Haileigh Patton  
Lily Rettig

*Dew Drop*

Ellie Barry

*Nutcracker Grand Pas*

Rachel Burton  
Daniel Kellen

*Sleigh Ride*

Capri Cory  
Andrew Frandson  
Grace Ann Frandson  
Maggie Jacobson-Fisher  
Matthew Jacobson-Fisher  
Louisa Ludes-Bedell  
Piper Schrank  
Makayla Schuler  
Allison Tjaden  
Will Williams

*We Three Kings*

Adriana Detrick-Ballew  
London Hibbing  
Lyla Kruse  
Madaline Patton  
Kelsey Robinson  
Taylin Van Houten  
Michaela West

*Carol of the Bells*

Kelsey Allman  
Ellie Barry  
Mary Bresnahan  
Libby Carl  
Sophija Elsberry  
Hallie Johnson  
Liza Mendelev  
Everlie Mitchell  
Grace Nelson  
Kate Nelson  
Riley Nelson  
Michelle Osanya  
Ava Reason

*Carol of the Bells (continued)*

Autumn Rettig  
Lily Rettig  
Bianca Serao  
Clara Serao  
Brianna Tjaden  
Josie Van Gorp  
Will Williams  
Adam Wolf  
Isabel Wolf  
Raquel Wolf  
Harmony Wong  
Tiffany Zhou

*Sugarplum Celebration Staff & Artisans*

Producer..... Iowa Youth Ballet  
Artistic Director..... Robert Thomas  
Assistant to the Director..... Kimberly Kellen  
Production Designers..... Deborah Patton & Maureen McGrath  
Backstage Coordinator..... Lisa Davis  
Technical Director & Stage Manager..... Mike Broich  
Audio..... Jake Ewalt & Dennis Haislip  
Prop Construction & Painting..... Duane Wolf, Jeff Kellen & Patsy McNaughton  
Technical Support Staff..... Iowa State Center Tech Staff

*IYB Executive Board*

Serica Maiers, President  
Robert Thomas, Vice President  
Kimberly Kellen, Treasurer  
Mariana Serao, Secretary  
Lisa Davis, Member at Large

*IYB Artistic Board*

Miyoko Kato Thomas, Artistic Director Emeritus  
Robert Thomas, Artistic Director

*"May You Live In Interesting Times." We'll have to say that 2020 has been interesting. So much has happened that it leaves one mentally spinning. Throughout it all you have been faithful to us and we can't thank you enough. Without your support we would have had to close our doors. We truly love all of you. We won't forget what you have done for us, and for the studio.*

*Thank You!  
Robert and Miyoko*

## Meet our Choreographers

### *Lisa Luiben-Woxell*



*Currently teaches:* Ballet, Pointe, Tap; Ballet Mistress & Regisseur, Iowa Youth Ballet

Lisa began dancing at the age of three under the instruction of Connie Jo Wilson. She continued her training with Janet Morse, Robert Thomas, the Des Moines Ballet School, and Central Iowa Dance.

Lisa has been teaching since 1987 and she is a Dance Master Certified Instructor. Lisa has been teaching at the Robert Thomas Dancercenter since 1999. She also currently teaches at Ankeney Dance and Performing Arts Academy. In addition she has taught at Connie Jo Wilson's School of Dance, the Dancer's Workshop, the Newton YMCA, Carol Tetmeyer Dance Studio, and Stacey's School of Dance. Lisa has performed with Iowa Dance Theatre, the "Nutcracker Ballet", the Neuman Project, the Barnstormers, Flightline, and with Dance Olympus on tour.

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### *Maureen McGrath*



*Currently teaches:* Contemporary, Jazz, Lyrical, Modern, Musical Theatre, Tap; Dancercenter Dancers Director

Maureen McGrath, a native of Des Moines, graduated from Iowa State University with a Bachelor of Science in Dance and Apparel Design.

Before joining the Dancercenter, she taught jazz, tap, ballet, and tumbling in Des Moines for over ten years. She began teaching for the Robert Thomas Dancercenter in 2000 and has been in charge of the Dancercenter Dancers competition team since 2001. Since assuming the competition program, Maureen has taken the Dancercenter Dancers from a team of less than 20 dancers to over 60 dancers from Ames and the central Iowa area. Under her direction, the team has won numerous first place, high point, top soloist, and top team awards at competitions in Des Moines, Davenport, Cedar Rapids, Kansas City, and Omaha. This year, the team will compete in over 30 solos, duets, group, and production dances in jazz, tap, lyrical and musical theatre categories.

In addition to creating the choreography, Maureen designs the competition costumes and has won numerous awards for both choreography and costuming on both the regional and national levels. Two of her solo dancers have won first place honors in the large school division of the Iowa State Drill Team Association Solo Contest, competing her choreographies against over 75 dancers from all over Iowa.

Maureen also teaches all levels of jazz, tap and combination classes in the Ames studios. She has choreographed the American and Arabian parts in the Iowa State Center "Nutcracker".

Maureen continues her personal dance education every summer, training in New York City with Master Teachers including Suzi Taylor, Joe Lanteri, Doug Caldwell, Joe Tremaine, Mike Minery, Jason Parsons, Frank Hatchett, and Michele Asaf. She is a certified instructor by Dance Educators of America.

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### *Ellen Mullen*



*Currently teaches:* Ballet, Pointe, Jazz, Tap, Musical Theatre; Ballet Mistress, Iowa Youth Ballet

Ellen (Crawford) Mullen started teaching ballet, pointe, jazz, and combination classes at the Robert Thomas Dancercenter in college. She has taught all ages of dancers at every level. In addition to being a lead teacher at the Dancercenter, Ellen is a Ballet Mistress for Iowa Youth Ballet, and has been involved in the Iowa State Center's "Nutcracker Ballet", beginning with the very first Nutcracker production.

Ellen's dance studies and experience span many years. An Ames native, Ellen started studying dance at a very young age with Ann Dirksen. Her dance training continued, and passion for dance grew, under the instruction of Terry Thomas, and especially with Robert and Miyoko Kato Thomas at the Robert Thomas Dancercenter. Ellen went on to study ballet at the University of Utah, at the Des Moines Ballet, in New York City, at the Ballet West Intensive, and at the Joffrey Ballet Intensive at the University of Iowa before coming back to the Dancercenter to continue teaching.

As an instructor at the Robert Thomas Dancercenter, Ellen enjoys the opportunity to share her lifelong love for dance with her many students. She is mother to three daughters, Liz, Leanna, and Allie, who share that love of dance; and she teaches management classes at Iowa State University, having earned a Ph.D. in Industrial Relations from the University of Minnesota.

## Meet our Choreographers



*Wendy Leopold*

*Currently teaches:* Ballet, Pointe; Ballet Mistress, Iowa Youth Ballet

Wendy started dancing in Massachusetts at age ten. She continued when her family moved back to Iowa at Ballet Iowa. She also danced on a competition team for many years. After high school she went to the Royal Winnipeg Ballet for teacher training and ballet. She has been to many summer intensives and has performed in many “Nutcrackers” and operas, as well as Iowa Youth Ballet and ISU showcases. Wendy is a mother of three boys! Her love for teaching is enormous and she is excited to share that with the students at Robert Thomas Dancercenter.

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*Gil McNaughton*

*Currently teaches:* Ballet, Tap, Jazz, Musical Theatre; Ballet Master, Iowa Youth Ballet

MA in Interdisciplinary Studies of Dance, Music, and History & BFA in Dance

1970-1983: Professional dancer with Walt Disney/NBC Productions, Dallas Ballet, Pacific Ballet Theatre, Dallas Summer Musicals, Casa Manana, Windmill Dinner Theatres, and Country Dinner Theatres chain. He has performed with Gene Kelly, Ginger Rogers, Ricardo Montelban, John Davidson, and Van Johnson to name a few.

1983-2000: Artistic Director for Cedar Rapids Civic Ballet, adjunct dance instructor for Coe College, choreographer for Cedar Rapids Theatre and Coe College.

2000-2002: Artistic Dance Director for Reif Center of Performing Arts in Grand Rapids, MN

2002-2004: Assistant Director and Choreographer for TEXAS -Legacies Outdoor Musical Drama and instructor for West Texas A&M

2004-2005: Full time dance professor at Southeast Missouri State.

2006-Current: Teaches for the Robert Thomas Dancercenter

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*Teagan Roberts*

*Currently teaches:* Ballet, Tap, Jazz; Ballet Mistress, Iowa Youth Ballet

Teagan began dancing at the age of five with the Robert Thomas Dancercenter because her grandmother saw her dancing around the house and knew she needed to be trained as a dancer. For additional dance opportunities, she began dancing with the Dancercenter Dancers dance company soon after starting classes at the studio.

Participating on the team provided her with training from Maureen McGrath and other teachers, as well as additional performance opportunities.

Teagan has trained with teachers including Robert Thomas, Miyoko Kato Thomas, Maureen McGrath, Michael Fothergill, Miki Kawamura, Emily Finch, Lisa Luiken-Woxell, Gil McNaughton, Ellen Mullen, and Tanner Hronek through the years. She also had the opportunity to study at the Joffrey and Giordano Dance Studio in Chicago through her participation with Iowa Youth Ballet. She also studied dance in New York at Broadway Dance Center, Alvin Alley, and Steps on Broadway. Through her participation in Dancercenter Dancers she has attended workshops with NYCDA, WCDE, JUMP, and NUVO and had the opportunity to study with such choreographers as Joe Lanteri, Mia Michaels, Mandy Moore, Jason Parsons, Anthony Morigerato, Dana Wilson, Misha Gabriel, and Joey Dowling.

As a performer, Teagan has performed in the Stephens Auditorium’s annual production of the “Nutcracker” with parts ranging from Clara’s friend, Clara, Chinese, Snow, Arabian, and Flute, as well as soloist parts including Fairy Godmother and Dew Drop Fairy. She also performed in the Iowa Youth Ballet yearly production. She has also performed in a production of Kidz Rock in Branson, MO. Teagan graduated with a degree in Environmental Science and is employed as an education specialist at Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines.

## Meet our Choreographers



*Madaline Patton*

**Currently teaches:** Irish, Ballet, Gymnastics, Jazz, Tap, Pointe, Irish Performance Team

Madaline Patton has enjoyed dance since the age of five at the Robert Thomas Dancer. Over the years, she has taken many dance classes: ballet, pointe, tap, jazz, lyrical, and Irish soft shoe and hard shoe. She has also participated in the Iowa Youth Ballet (IYB) and the Irish Performance Team (IPT). Because of her love of dance, she began working as a studio demonstrator at the age of six and has been an instructor since 2016. Madaline participated in IYB for more than 10 years and has been a member of IPT for 10 years.

While dancing at the studio she has had the chance to perform as Princess Aurora in Act 3 of *Sleeping Beauty*, Swanhilda in Act 1 of *Coppélia*, and the Main Princess in *The Firebird*. During the Christmas season, the Iowa State Center produces the "Nutcracker Ballet" where she has been able to perform in a variety of roles including Clara, Dew Drop Fairy, Fairy Godmother, Irish, Snowflake, Flute, and Ballerina Doll.

Madaline has had many opportunities to perform due to her Irish experience. She has performed with a handful of Irish bands including Iona, where she was invited on stage by the members of the band to perform and was asked back two years later. She has also performed with Celtic Fire when they came to CY Stephens, and the Blue Moon Players at Reiman Gardens. Madaline has also had the opportunity to perform at Dublin Bay, residential homes, the Irish Hooley of Dubuque, *Maifest* in the Amana Colonies, the Iowa State Fair for several years, and has taught for and performed at the Iowa Irish Festival in Waterloo, Iowa twice.

Madaline has also had the pleasure of taking master classes twice at the Joffrey Ballet of Chicago. When the Joffrey came to the Dancer, she participated in those master classes. Madaline has also had Irish master classes under Barb McNulty, who is the director of the McNulty Irish Dancers in Chicago.

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Serica Maiers

Currently teaches: Irish, Irish Performance Team

Serica is a graduate from St. Mary's University of MN with a Bachelor's degree in Secondary Social Studies Education and a certificate in Leadership. She is a Senior District Executive with Mid-Iowa Council, BSA. Growing up in Dubuque, Serica trained in Irish Dance with the Claddagh/McNulty Irish Dance School and in college with Flanagan School of Irish Dance. She has danced in seven countries, including Ireland and India and has studied with the Riverdance dancers three times. She trained in Classic Russian Ballet with the Academy of Ballet/Heartland Ballet Company for twelve years. Her extensive performance list includes sixteen full-length ballets, twelve musicals, one play, and one opera.